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Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Human rights

Half-day discussion on the Arctic

Information received from Governments

Namibia

I. Introduction

1. In Namibia, the term "indigenous peoples" is not applicable since all the Namibians are indigenous peoples of their country. However, the wording "most marginalized people" is applicable and it refers to the most vulnerable and extremely poor people of our community. These include the San and Ovahimba (Ovatue) peoples of our country and other small group of minorities.

2. It is against this background that the Cabinet of the Republic of Namibia, according to decision No. 25/29.11.05/001, in 2005 approved the development of a focused and dedicated programme for the development of the San communities called the "San Development Programme", so that they can be integrated into the mainstream of our economy to achieve "Vision 2030" and the Millennium Development Goals on the eradication of extreme poverty. In terms of local policy on development, which is referred to as the Third National Development Plan (NDP3), the welfare of the San peoples is categorized under key result area; and quality of life. The Cabinet also approved that the Programme be under the Office of the Prime Minister, spearheaded by the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

3. Since the inception of the Programme various programmes and projects have been implemented for the benefit of this community. These include access to education for San learners; resettlement of San communities on farms; coffin-manufacturing projects for the San peoples; provision of draught animals and garden projects; employment opportunities; aquaculture projects; San women projects; and

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beekeeping projects. It is estimated that since 2005, the Government has spent close to N$ 3 million on the Programme.

4. In addition, in 2007 the Cabinet directed the Office of the Prime Minister, spearheaded by the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, to resettle the Ovatue and Ovatjimba communities in the Kunene region. These communities have been successfully resettled at Otjomuru, Otjikojo and Ohaihuua villages. At all three villages, access to housing, access to clean water, primary schools and health facilities have been provided. The community has also received cattle and goats to start farming, and garden projects have been introduced. It is estimated that the Government has spent N$ 3.5 million on this project.

5. The Government of the Republic of Namibia will continue in its efforts to assist our most marginalized communities where possible, to make sure that all of us as Namibians are integrated into the mainstream of our economy to achieve our "Vision 2030". There is no doubt that other marginalized communities will benefit from the Programme in the future.

II. Questionnaire to the Government from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

1. The Republic of Namibia would like to address the questionnaire to Governments as follows:

(a) The Republic of Namibia is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;[1]

(b) Our policy is referred to as "NDP3", which is a poverty reduction strategy paper and includes the eradication of extreme poverty among our most marginalized people and their participation, and is in line with the objectives and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals;[2]

(c) The Government of Namibia is trying its utmost to make sure that all Namibian children have access to school and this includes children from the most marginalized communities. Under the San Development Programme specific efforts are specifically made for the marginalized children to assist them where possible;[3]

(d) Under the Namibian Constitution all human rights issues are guaranteed and protected accordingly;[4]

(e) All our law enforcement agencies are required to be familiar and acquaint themselves with human rights issues and the principle of human dignity whenever they are executing their duties;[5]

(f) The Government of Namibia is promoting the establishment of community radios. Currently a radio station has been established in the Tsumkwe

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 23* (E/2008/43), para. 18.
[2] Ibid., para. 64.
[3] Ibid., para. 89.
[4] Ibid., para. 90.
[5] Ibid., para. 92.

area and will be expanded to other areas where the most marginalized communities are living, provided there is an availability of resources.[6]

2. Capacity-building and lack of resources on the part of the Government are obstacles to the implementation of the Permanent Forum's recommendations.

3. The Government of Namibia has put policies in place to address the issues of eradication of extreme poverty. These include NDP3 and Vision 2030.

4. The San Development Programme is in the Office of the Prime Minister.

5. The Government of Namibia just recently signed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and is looking forward to suggestions from and constructive dialogue with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the Declaration.

[6] Ibid., para. 149.